

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 COLOMB 01059 231150Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 MCT-01 AID-05 PC-01 OPR-02 A-01 SY-05
OC-06 CCO-00 IO-13 /090 W
-----232040Z 053807 /41
R 231111Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6977

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 1059

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CE

SUBJ: ONE KILLED IN POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION

1. A VILLAGE-LEVEL UNITED NATIONAL PARTY (UNP) POLITICAL WORKER WAS KILLED AND TWELVE OTHERS SERIOUSLY INJURED MARCH 20 WHEN A UNP DEMONSTRATION IN DEVINUWARA WAS BROKEN UP BY LOCAL SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY (SLFP) MEMBERS WITH BOTTLES AND HOMEMADE BOMBS. THE PREMEDITATED ATTACK IS ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN PLANNED BY FORMER SENATOR DICKSON SILVA, SLFP ORGANIZER FOR THE CONSTITUENCY, AND CHAIRMAN, CEYLON FISHERIES CORPORATION. THE POLICE ARE REPORTEDLY LOOKING FOR SILVA AND FOURTEEN OTHERS AND ALREADY HAVE ARRESTED TEN SUSPECTS.

2. THE INCIDENT HAS SO FAR BEEN ALMOST BLACKED OUT IN THE ENGLISH PRESS, WITH THE DAILY NEWS FINALLY PRINTING A SHORT NOTICE MARCH 23 THAT SUSPECTS HAD BEEN ARRESTED, BUT GIVING NO EXPLICIT INDICATION THAT THE ATTACK HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH POLITICS. IN AN UNFORTUNATE JUXTAPOSITION, THE DAILY NEWS EDITORIAL OF THE SAME DAY ATTACKED UNP "VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION." THE UNP SINHALA DAILY HAD A LENGTHY ARTICLE WHICH AMONG OTHER ACCUSATIONS ALLEGED THAT THE ATTACKERS HAD BEEN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 COLOMB 01059 231150Z

TRANSPORTED IN TRUCKS OF "A CERTAIN GOVERNMENT CORPORATION" (PRESUMABLY FISHERIES).

3. THE FAR SOUTHERN CONSTITUENCY OF DEVINUWARA IS A PARTICULARLY HOT SPOT POLITICALLY, IN PART BECAUSE THE SITTING M.P., RONNIE DE MEL, WAS ELECTED IN 1970 AS A SLFP'ER BUT DEFECTED AND IS NOW A PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE UNP. IN ADDITION, THE

DAY BEFORE THE DEVINUWARA INCIDENT, THERE HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN VIOLENCE INSTIGATED BY UNP FOLLOWERS IN THE ADJOINING CONSTITUENCY OF MATARA, WHERE A COMMUNIST PARTY RALLY WAS BEING HELD. TENSION IN THE AREA MAY BE FURTHER EXACERBATED BY THE ANNOUNCED ENTRANCE INTO THE DEVINUWARA RACE OF EX-INSURGENT MAHINDA WIJESEKERA, ON HIS MVP PARTY TICKET.

4. COMMENT: THIS VIOLENCE IS AN INDICATION OF HOW HIGH FEELINGS ARE RUNNING IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD; IT IS A GLOOMY FOREBODING FOR THE COMING CAMPAIGN. THE ONLY ENCOURAGING ASPECT IS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO ALLEGATIONS OF POLICE IMPROPRIETIES. THE POLICE APPARENTLY DID THEIR BEST TO BREAK UP THE BRAWL AND ARE NOW PURSUING THE CASE VIGOROUSLY.
REED

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977COLOMB01059
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770100-0095
Format: TEL
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770332/aaaabbmi.tel
Line Count: 76
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: daa7aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3027821
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ONE KILLED IN POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION
TAGS: PINT, CE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/daa7aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009